

July 2018



# Arkansas School Safety Commission

PRELIMINARY REPORT  
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## Introduction

On March 1, 2018, Governor Asa Hutchinson, in the wake of the horrific school shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida (February 14, 2018 with 14 students and three staff murdered and 17 others wounded), signed an executive order forming the Arkansas School Safety Commission (the Commission). The Governor's Proclamation is presented in Appendix A. The purpose of the Commission is to advise the Governor and the Department of Education on school safety across Arkansas. Governor Hutchinson appointed 18 individuals representing professional backgrounds in education, mental health and law enforcement, as well as parents to serve on the Commission. A full listing of all Commission members and their backgrounds is provided in Appendix B. Governor Hutchinson appointed Dr. Cheryl May, Director of the University of Arkansas System's Criminal Justice Institute, as Chair of the Commission and Mr. William Temple, retired Special Agent in Charge of the Federal Bureau of Investigation's Arkansas Office, was chosen as the Commission's Vice Chair.

In addition to providing findings concerning school safety across Arkansas, Governor Hutchinson asked the Commission to:

1. Study and analyze the safety of K-12 schools throughout the state taking into consideration the physical and mental health of students;
2. Study the architecture and construction of school buildings as it relates to the safety of students and staff in those buildings, including prevention and response to active shooter threats;
3. Make recommendations to the Governor and the Department of Education on improvements or changes needed to increase school safety;
4. Consider any and all issues associated with school safety and undertake school visits, visits with school resource officers, building principals, counselors, superintendents, and others to have a comprehensive view of this topic; and
5. Consider assigning subcommittees with directions to consider several topics and report back to the full Commission with recommendations to be considered.

The Commission was directed to provide an initial report and recommendations to the Governor on July 1, 2018, and a final report of findings and recommendations shall be submitted to the Governor no later than November 30, 2018. Following the submission of the final report, the work of the Commission will conclude.

As members of the Commission, we applaud Governor Hutchinson's previous (National School Shield Task Force)<sup>1</sup> and current leadership and passion on the issue of school safety and his vision to make Arkansas's schools safer, providing all of Arkansas's children with the opportunity

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<sup>1</sup> Asa, Hutchinson, Director, National School Shield Task Force, The National Shield Report, Report of the National School Shield Task Force, (2013).

to reach their true academic potential free from fear of violence. We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to fulfilling his vision.

As Arkansans, we are all particularly mindful that we have experienced the profound pain and loss that result from school shootings. On December 15, 1997, two students were wounded at Stamps High School. Twenty years ago on March 24<sup>th</sup>, four students and one teacher were murdered and another ten were wounded at Westside Middle School near Jonesboro. Unfortunately, since the Governor's March 1, 2018 Proclamation, two additional school shootings have occurred. On May 18, 2018, eight students and two teachers were fatally shot and 13 others wounded at Santa Fe High School in Texas. On May 25, 2018, a student and teacher were wounded at Noblesville West Middle School in Indiana. Our state's history and these recent and other heinous acts against our children, such as the Columbine High School and Sandy Hook Elementary School massacres, are unacceptable and illustrate the real vulnerability of our schools and the need to develop strategies that ensure our children and those entrusted with their safety, security and development are provided with knowledge, skills and resources to prevent, protect against, mitigate, respond to and recover from events of violence in schools.

Finally, the progress that the Commission has made would not have been possible without the invaluable support of Commissioner Johnny Key and the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE). In particular, we commend the extraordinary support we have received from ADE staff Doug Bradberry and Angela Scaife.

Below is a description of the activities of the Commission and a discussion of our preliminary recommendations.

### Arkansas School Safety Commission Activities

The Commission has met a total of nine times. A list of the meeting dates are provided in Appendix C. During the initial meeting of the Commission on March 13, 2018, five subcommittees were officially formed to enhance the amount and timeliness of activities to be completed. Below is a list of the Commission's subcommittees along with topical areas considered and the chairs and members chosen for each subcommittee.

#### 1. Law Enforcement and Security

- a. Topical areas: School Resource Officers (SROs), Commissioned School Security Officers (CSSOs), Auxiliary Officers/Deputies, school visitations by local law enforcement, combinations of the above and any and all viable law enforcement/security strategies. Considerations may include training and choice of personnel, if applicable, and the identification of best practices.
- b. Chair: Sheriff Tim Helder, Washington County Sheriff's Office; Members: Dr. David Hopkins, William Temple, John Allison, Director Jami Cook, Fire Chief Tom Jenkins, Ricky Hopkins, and Deputy Superintendent Marvin Burton.

2. Audits, Emergency Operation Plans and Drills
  - a. Topical areas: Safety and Security Audits, Emergency Operation Plans and Active Shooter Drills. Considerations include current status and strategies and identification of best practices.
  - b. Chair: Director AJ Gary, Arkansas Department of Emergency Management; Members: Will Jones, John Kaminar, Dr. David Hopkins and John Allison.
3. Intelligence and Communications
  - a. Topical areas: Communication strategies between and among law enforcement, schools, parents and effective intelligence gathering and identification of potential threats. Considerations include current status and strategies and identification of best practices.
  - b. Chair: Director Jami Cook, Arkansas Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Training; Members: Director AJ Gary, William Temple, Dr. Sterling Claypool and Deputy Superintendent Marvin Burton.
4. Mental Health and Prevention
  - a. Topical Areas: Mental health awareness in schools, student access to services, and crisis intervention; school violence prevention strategies to include school climate surveys, behavioral threat assessment teams, evidence-based anti-bullying programs, gang and drug awareness, suicide prevention, Adverse Childhood Experiences, Prescription for Life, Drug Endangered Children, Break the Cycle, Stop the Bleed, Adult Predatory Behavior in Schools, Naloxone in Schools and any identified best practices.
  - b. Chairs: Ms. Lori Poston, Child and Adolescent Therapist and Dr. Sterling Claypool, Professor in Psychology at South Arkansas Community College and parent of students in El Dorado School District; Members: Dawn Anderson, John Kaminar and Dr. Margaret Weiss.
5. Physical Security and Transportation
  - a. Topical Areas: Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED), physical access control, exterior and perimeter security, lighting, landscaping, interior and exterior doors and locks, exterior and interior monitoring and surveillance, metal detectors and other strategies.
  - b. Chair: Director Brad Montgomery, ADE Public School Academic Facilities; Members: Dr. David Hopkins, Fire Chief Tom Jenkins, Dr. Joyce Cottoms and Dawn Anderson.

In addition to these subcommittees, an ad hoc committee was established and chaired by Mr. John Kaminar to identify schools for recommendation to the Commission for visitation. Members of this ad hoc committee are Director Brad Montgomery, Dr. David Hopkins, Dr. Joyce Cottoms, Deputy Superintendent Marvin Burton, Dr. Sterling Claypool and Sheriff Tim Helder. Dr. Cheryl May attended the majority of all subcommittee and ad hoc committee meetings.

addition to Dr. May, Director Brad Montgomery and Doug Bradberry attended all school visits. Commission member Mr. Will Jones, Deputy Attorney General, Office of the Attorney General and Ms. Courtney Salas-Ford, ADE Deputy General Counsel, provided legal guidance and clarification. A list of each committee and meeting dates are also provided in Appendix C.

During the last three months, the Commission has visited several Arkansas schools and heard from subject matter experts, school resource officers, school administrators, school board members, teachers, law enforcement executives and the general public either through full Commission or subcommittee meetings. We greatly appreciate the valuable time of all presenters and the knowledge, expertise and passion for school safety that they provided. A list of all presenters and the schools visited by the Commission are provided in Appendix D. We are especially grateful to Superintendent Scott Gauntt and the staff and students at Westside Middle School for hosting a full Commission meeting and providing not only a presentation of their implemented school safety strategies, but also a tour of their facility. We would also like to express our appreciation to Ms. Kathy Martinez-Prather, Director of the Texas School Safety Center (TxSSC), for her valuable presentation on the impressive work of the TxSSC.

The activities of the Commission will continue until the final report is submitted on November 30, 2018. To continue to identify best practices and develop final recommendations, the Commission will continue to meet on a regular basis and hear school safety presentations from key stakeholders and subject matter experts and conduct additional school site visits. The Commission is also developing a school safety questionnaire that will be administered to schools across the state. The results of this survey will be integrated into our final report.

### **Commission Preliminary Recommendations**

The preliminary recommendations of the full Commission are below by subcommittee. Each subcommittee met numerous times and heard presentations from various subject matter experts. Based on the information provided through these and Commission presentations, as well as research and the knowledge and experience of the subcommittee members, the subcommittees identified potential recommendations to bring forward to the full Commission for an official vote. The preliminary recommendations were presented to the Commission on June 11<sup>th</sup> and June 21<sup>st</sup> and were unanimously approved for further discussion and review by the Commission.

### **Law Enforcement and Security Subcommittee**

The following preliminary recommendations are viable and available means for schools to protect against the real vulnerability to active threats (any threat against the safety and security of the students and staff). These recommendations represent ways in which schools can be “hardened” to more effectively protect students, faculty, staff, administration and patrons. It is critically important that our students not only feel safe, but actually are

safe. After careful study of previous active shooter incidents,<sup>1</sup> it has become apparent that a rapid armed response from within the school building, saves lives. The faster a school shooter is engaged by armed responders the sooner the situation is halted; this translates to lives saved. No campus should ever be without armed presence when staff and children are present. Whether to provide armed presence and decisions on which strategies to employ are clearly local decisions for school administrators, school boards, parents, teachers and the community and should be made after careful consideration of many factors. Therefore, strategies employed by one district or school may not be applicable to others because of a variety of unique circumstances. The information provided below should provide guidance in making these decisions.

All of Arkansas's 235 school districts, including 1,053 schools with 479,258 enrolled students, are unique. Therefore, strategies employed by one district or school may not be applicable to others because of a variety of unique circumstances. The information provided below should provide guidance in making these decisions.

1. **School Resource Officers:** School Resource Officers (SROs) are sworn law enforcement officers who are assigned specifically to local schools. SRO presence on campus is permitted to assist with school security, safety, emergency preparedness, emergency response, etc. through Ark. Code Ann. § 6-10-128. The National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) defines a SRO as a career law enforcement officer with sworn authority who is deployed by an employing police department or agency in a community-oriented policing assignment to work in collaboration with one or more schools. Responsibilities of SROs should include the functions of educator and mentor, informal counselor and law enforcement officer<sup>2</sup>. SROs provide schools with the means to not only protect, mitigate and respond to, but also prevent violence in schools.

Numerous presenters to the Commission advocated for the need for more SROs in Arkansas's schools. In particular, the Arkansas Association of Education Administrators conducted a survey of school administrators and the use of SROs on campus was ranked as the highest need among respondents. During the five school visits conducted by the Commission, each superintendent was asked what was the one thing they would do to make their schools safer, if funding was not an issue. All five responded their number one priority would be to hire a SRO or hire additional SROs. ADE's Safe Schools Committee also advocated for the use of SROs. During the public forum conducted on May 30, 2018, all presenters, several of whom were parents or grandparents, who spoke against teachers and administrators being armed, indicated they supported the use of

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<sup>1</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation. (April 2018). "Active Shooter Incidents in the United States in 2016 and 2017." Retrieved from <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/active-shooter-incidents-us-2016-2017.pdf/view>.

<sup>2</sup> <https://nasro.org/frequently-asked-questions/>



SROs. In discussions with individual schools, the intent to hire additional SROs was expressed. For example, the Springdale School District is anticipating to increase the number of SROs in their schools to 22.

Arkansas has historically supported the use of SROs on K-12 campuses. The Criminal Justice Institute's Arkansas Center for School Safety (ACSS) conducts a SRO census each school year. For the 2017-2018 school year, there were 316 SROs identified in 156 school districts (66% of the 238 school districts) across the state. This is an increase of 92 SROs since the 2012-2013 school year. During this same time period, 31 additional school districts initiated the use of SROs on campus. According to a 2018 report from the National Center for Education Statistics, 42% of public schools in the U.S. had an SRO present at least one day of each school week<sup>3</sup>. NASRO recommends that there be one SRO for every 1,000 students. If financially practicable, the Commission encourages schools to have, ideally, at least one SRO for each Local Education Agency (LEA) or campus. A LEA could include the district or individual buildings, schools, or campuses depending upon the geographic size and composition of the district.

While the Commission views an SRO as a viable means to protect against, mitigate, respond to and prevent violence in schools, the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or interagency agreement executed between a law enforcement agency and the school's administration, as well as the training received by the SRO, are also important considerations. A MOU between the school administration and a law enforcement agency should be executed when a SRO is used at a school. There is great variation in the MOUs executed and little consistency of information included. Consequently, a model MOU should be developed that consistently identifies the roles and responsibilities of SROs and other critical elements such as the participation of the school administration in the selection of the SRO. ADE's Safe Schools Committee, established through legislation in 1997 (Act 1346 of 1997) in the wake of the shooting at Stamps High School, is tasked to develop model policies and procedures, including emergency plans, for school districts that ensure a safe and productive learning environment for students and school employees and to recommend to the State Board of Education or the Arkansas House and Senate Education Committees any rules and regulations or legislation needed to ensure a safe school environment. The Commission will work with the ADE's Safe Schools Committee in the development of a model MOU to be executed between a law enforcement agency and school administration when SROs are used on campus.

Given their specialized roles and responsibilities, SROs should receive specialized training. The ACSS 2017-2018 school year SRO census also asked each district which used SROs if these SROs received any specialized training. Only 67% of the districts indicated that the SROs on their campus had completed basic SRO training. To raise the level of professionalism among SROs,

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<sup>3</sup> [https://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/ind\\_S01.asp](https://nces.ed.gov/programs/crimeindicators/ind_S01.asp)



the ADE's Safe Schools Committee has worked with numerous SROs, the Arkansas Safe Schools Association and the ACSS to develop four levels of acknowledgement for SROs which each emphasize training and demonstration of relationships between the SROs and students, administration and the community. A description of each of the four levels is provided in Appendix E.

Training for SROs is available through the Criminal Justice Institute's (CJI) Arkansas Center for School Safety. CJI has a long history of providing school safety training for law enforcement (including SROs) and school personnel. Since 2009, CJI has delivered 487 school safety classes to 14,773 law enforcement and education staff. At the recommendation of ADE's Safe Schools Committee, on July 13, 2017, the Commissioner of Education and Director of CJI executed a MOU officially forming the ACSS, a one stop shop for school safety training and resources for Arkansas law enforcement and school personnel. The executed MOU establishing the ACSS is provided in Appendix F. A description of the training available through the Center is provided in Appendix G. Training available for SROs includes a focus on active shooter/active threat response as well as courses designed to assist SROs to be better equipped to effectively engage with youth and prevent school violence. Arkansas is one of only 18 states that have state-wide and state-sanctioned school safety centers.

Almost 90% percent of the SROs identified as being trained in the 2017-2018 school year SRO census had completed basic SRO training through the ACSS. Others received basic SRO training through the National Association of School Resource Officers (NASRO) or a NASRO affiliated organization. Both the ACSS and NASRO basic SRO courses are 40 hours and consistent in topics presented which include SRO roles and responsibilities, ethics, school law, SRO as a teacher, violence and victimization and SROs as informal counselor/mentor.

1. **Commissioned School Security Officers:** The Arkansas legislature, through Act 393 of 2015 (Ark. Code Ann. § 17-40-330 et seq), authorized the use of Commissioned School Security Officers (CSSO) by schools. The use of CSSOs in the school district must be approved by the superintendent. CSSOs can be administrators, faculty, or staff and must pass a standard background check. CSSOs must complete an initial 60 hours of specialized training developed by the Arkansas State Police, followed by 24 hours each year to maintain their commission. The specialized training must include legal authority, field note taking and report writing, familiarity with Act 393 of 2015, use of deadly force and Arkansas law, weapons and safety, live fire training, marksmanship and qualifications, pistol qualifications, legal limitation (use of firearms/powers and authority of CSSO), active shooter training, active shooter simulations, trauma care/CPR certification, defensive tactics and weapon retention. CSSOs are also required to complete firearms qualification yearly.

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) restricts information on school and campus security and safety information (Act 541 of 2017), the number of school districts using CSSOs in Arkansas is

not known. However, the Clarksville School District has openly provided information about their Emergency Response Team (ERT) and their use of CSSOs. The Commission recommends the Clarksville School District's ERT program as a best practice use of CSSOs. The Clarksville ERT program has several requirements beyond those innumbrated by Act 393 and the Arkansas State Police. These additional requirements for all ERT members are:

- a. standard psychological exam;
- b. random drug screening; and
- c. ERT members to train regularly with local law enforcement.

The Clarksville School District also has implemented a policy specific to their ERT program. This policy is provided in Appendix H. The Commission recommends that all schools that use CSSOs on campus adopt a similar policy. The Arkansas School Boards Association should develop and make available a model policy for CSSOs/ERT programs that mirrors the Clarksville policy.

The Commission also recommends that additional oversight of CSSO programs should be exercised with respect to weapons discharge. Any discharge of a weapon by a CSSO on campus or at a school-sponsored event is reported to the Arkansas State Police and also be reported to the ADE's Professional Standards Board. If a discharge does occur, whether the weapon was discharged lawfully or whether the weapon was discharged negligently, it should be reported and investigated.

2. **Additional Options for Increasing Armed Presence on School Campuses:** The Commission also identified several other law enforcement/security strategies that can be used to "harden" schools. These are:

- Recruiting retired law enforcement officers or deputies as Auxiliary Officers or CSSOs and
- Collaborate with local law enforcement and seek ways to increase officer traffic and visibility on campus. For example, the Benton and Bentonville Police Departments have implemented a policy that promotes patrol and investigative officers to conduct safety checks throughout the schools in their jurisdiction. These and other departments have asked officers or deputies to also park their squad cars in the school's parking lot while they complete reports or visit schools during lunch. Other similar strategies include:
  - Use of current or retired officers or deputies as substitute teachers and
  - Allocation of office space within the school for a law enforcement officer or deputy to use during the day to complete reports and other administrative tasks.

The Commission advocates for schools to use combinations of the above strategies or "layering" to secure the schools. While the Benton and Bentonville School Districts do have SROs on

campus, they also have increased officer traffic on campus due to the school visitation policy the police departments have implemented. At Westside Middle School, SROs are used in combination with CSSOs. The Little Rock School District has used a combination of SROs and security personnel.

The Commission is also mindful, as voiced during the public forum, that incidents from inappropriate firearms handling (such as, leaving loaded weapons in spaces frequented by students) or discharges may occur when guns are on campus. According to the Associated Press,<sup>4</sup> more than 30 publicly reported mishaps involving firearms carried onto school grounds by educators or law enforcement personnel have occurred since 2014. All schools that increase armed presence should ensure all SROs, CSSOs, Auxiliary Officers/Deputies, etc. are appropriately trained in firearm handling and safety.

### **Audits, Emergency Operation Plans and Drills Subcommittee**

Essential to building a culture of preparedness and keeping school staff and children safe is the development of a high quality Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) that assists schools in preparing for, responding to and mitigating school-specific active threats. The Safe Schools Initiative Act (Act 484 of 2013; Act 950 of 2015-School Safety Act; Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-1303) requires schools to have EOPs, conduct annual active shooter drills and conduct school safety assessments. The Commission recommends that, as a vital step in the development and implementation of comprehensive and effective EOPs, all districts should be required to form District Safety and Security Teams. The primary roles of the District's School Safety and Security Team will be to conduct safety and security audits and develop and implement all hazard EOPs.

These teams must not only include school administrators, staff (teachers, nurses, students, food personnel, counselors, etc.) and SROs, if applicable, but also first responders within the community to include local law enforcement, emergency management and fire personnel. A strong partnership between the district/LEA and local first responders is critical to school safety.

Each campus should also designate one current staff member as a School Safety Coordinator. The Campus School Safety Coordinator should also be a member of the District's Safety and Security Team. Other individuals to potentially include are parents/guardians, a representative from the school board, and community mental health providers.

### **Emergency Operations Plans and Drills**

There are numerous resources available that can guide a district in the development or review of an EOP. The Arkansas Center for School Safety (ACSS) has compiled a list of such resources at [www.arsafeschools.com](http://www.arsafeschools.com). One such excellent resource is "Guide for Developing High-Quality School Emergency Operations Plans" developed collaboratively by the U.S. Department of

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.chicagotribune.com/sns-bc-us--guns-in-school-accidents-20180505-story.html>

Education, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation and Federal Emergency Management Agency and provides a step by step approach to EOP development. The ACSS also offers face-to-face training on planning, conducting and analyzing emergency crisis plans.

The ADE's Safe Schools Committee is mandated to develop model policies and procedures, including emergency plans, for school districts to ensure a safe and productive learning environment for students and school employees (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-1301). The Safe Schools Committee membership includes classroom teachers, school administrators, school board members, ADE staff, a school safety specialist, a person with school safety knowledge and a school counselor. The chairs of the House and Senate Education Committees or their designees are also members. The Commission recommends that the membership of this committee be expanded to include the Director of the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management or his or her designee as well as fire and law enforcement representatives.

The preparedness of a school district or LEA to effectively respond to threats is highly dependent upon training, through the use of appropriate exercises and drills, of the staff and students. After action reports completed following every exercise or drill are critical for the identification of improvements in response. Also critical in conducting drills and exercises is the direct involvement of local first responders, including law enforcement, fire and emergency management personnel.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Administration (FEMA) offers a variety of resources to assist schools in conducting exercises. FEMA provides guidance in conducting discussion exercises, which include seminars, workshops, table tops and games, and operation exercises, which include drills, functional exercises and full-scale exercises, providing schools with the ability to progress from basic to full-scale exercises. County emergency management personnel are well versed and acquainted with discussion and operation exercises and must be directly involved in the school's implementation of exercises and drills. While school districts may file a floor plan with the county emergency management coordinator (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-10-125), it is critical that first responders have familiarity with the layout of the school. Consequently, the law should be changed to require schools to provide an up-to-date floor plan of all buildings to the county emergency manager.

A series of online classes focusing on exercises, including lockout, lockdown, and evacuation drills, is available through FEMA. Because not every threat is the same, situational awareness should be emphasized.

A fire alarm was activated intentionally during the Westside Middle School shooting in 1998 and most recently, inadvertently activated (as a result of the smoke created during gunfire) during the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. In both these instances, the normal behavior of students entering the halls to evacuate the building made

them easy targets for the perpetrators. To reduce such risks to students, a delay in response has been initiated when the fire alarm is activated at Westside Middle School. An evaluation of this modification in response procedures in the event of a fire alarm will be conducted by the Commission prior to the submission of the final report

### **School Safety Audits and Assessments**

A critical element in developing a high quality EOP for a school district is the identification of vulnerabilities. To assess vulnerability, schools are required by the Safe Schools Initiative Act of 2015 (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-15-1303) to conduct school safety assessments. The Commission recommends that comprehensive school safety assessments be required to be conducted every three years. The school board of each district should verify to ADE that the required assessments have been completed. Recommendations for improvement should be reviewed by the school board and school administration.

School safety assessments should be conducted by the District Safety and Security Team. Several tools are available to assist the district in conducting these assessments. The U.S Department of Education's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance Center recently released SITE ASSESS, a mobile application designed specifically for conducting site assessments. This resource and others are also found on the ACSS website. The ACSS also offers School Site Safety Assessment Online and Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events to assist schools in this process. Additionally, local law enforcement and emergency management staff should assist districts or LEAs in conducting comprehensive site safety assessments. These available resources eliminate the need for a district or LEA to incur any costs in the assessment process.

### **Mental Health and Prevention**

Essential elements of a comprehensive plan to prevent violence in schools are the identification of at-risk students and detecting emerging threats. Students cannot achieve their true academic potential in an environment that is threatening and volatile. With the right training and resources, all school personnel and students can contribute to preventing violence on campus.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recently released (June 15, 2018) the results of the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance for 2017.<sup>5</sup> Thirty-nine states participated in the survey of high school students in grades 9-12. While Arkansas had the 8<sup>th</sup> highest percentage (9.2%) of high school students who did not go to school because they felt unsafe at school or on the way home from school, Arkansas was ranked highest in the nation for the percentage of high school students who said they were bullied on school property (26.7%), and physically forced to have sexual intercourse (19.2%) and who experienced sexual violence by anyone (18.5%), experienced physical dating violence (12.1%), felt sad or hopeless (40.2%), seriously attempted

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<sup>5</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm?s\\_cid=tw-zaza-1171](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm?s_cid=tw-zaza-1171)

suicide (23.2%), made a plan about how they would attempt suicide (26.1%), and took pain medication without a prescription from a physician (19.3%-tied with Louisiana). Arkansas was ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, only behind Louisiana, with respect to the percentage of high school students who said they were threatened or injured with a weapon at school (11.7%), were in a physical fight at school (26.6%), actually attempted suicide (15.8%), ever used cocaine (9.4%) and injected any illegal drug (7.4%). The percentage of Arkansas high school students who said they were electronically bullied (19.7%) was 4<sup>th</sup> highest in the nation, only behind Alaska, Idaho and Louisiana. Arkansas clearly has a significant population of at-risk youth. The results of this survey indicate the great need for our schools to become more proactive in the identification of at-risk youth and making mental health services readily available.

### School Climate

A school climate where students feel safe and secure, inclusion and respect are promoted and the schools are free from behaviors like bullying can prevent violence. School administrators, staff, parents and the community must have an overall understanding of how students perceive school climate with respect to teaching and learning, relationships and safety in order to identify and deter climates favoring bullying and other negative behaviors that can have a direct impact on the emotional and mental health of students as well as school safety. School climate surveys are used to assess a school's strengths and vulnerabilities. Without climate surveys, it is much more difficult, if not impossible, for schools to become aware of potential issues such as bullying and harassment and other at-risk behaviors and take corrective actions.

The Commission advocates for every school district to conduct school climate surveys across all LEAs. Currently school climate surveys are only required by ADE for schools in academic distress. A variety of tools and resources are available to assist school districts with these assessments. The Commission has identified three free evidence-based climate survey instruments. These are:

- a. U.S. Department of Education's School Climate Survey  
<https://nces.ed.gov/surveys/edscls/questionnaires.asp>
- b. The SHAPE Assessment (developed by the University of Maryland's Center for School Mental Health, and is currently utilized by some districts in Arkansas:  
<https://theshapesystem.com/> and
- c. Schoolclimate.org assessment  
<https://www.schoolclimate.org/services/measuring-school-climate-csci>.

Following completion of the school climate assessment, schools should be required to develop and implement an action plan based on the findings of the school climate survey. The Little Rock School District and Watson Chapel School District have successfully used school climate surveys and after action reports to decrease the incidence of disciplinary issues.

Arkansas has the highest percentage of high school students who were bullied on campus and ranked 4<sup>th</sup> with respect to the percentage of students who were electronically bullied.<sup>6</sup> In both types of bullying, girls were victimized at a higher percentage than boys (31.4% vs 21.3% and 23.6% vs 15.5%, respectively). All of Arkansas schools are required to have anti-bullying policies and report all incidents of bullying (Ark. Code Ann. § 6-18-514). However, schools are not required to provide anti-bully programs. Especially given the recent CDC study results, the Commission recommends that all school districts be required to implement an evidence-based anti-bullying program. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration (SAMHSA) has a database of Evidence Based and Promising practices available: <https://nrepp.samhsa.gov/AdvancedSearch.aspx> including “promising” programs listed focused on bullying and violence prevention.

A major advancement in the enhancement of school culture and climate is the emphasis on school-wide systems of support that include proactive strategies for defining, teaching and supporting appropriate student behaviors to create positive school environments. Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS) is a strategy that creates a safe and predictable campus and promotes healthy relationships among students and adults. Traditionally, school-wide discipline has focused mainly on reacting to specific student misbehavior by implementing punitive strategies. According to information provided about PBIS from representatives of Arkansas State University’s Center for Community Engagement, “Implementation of punishment, especially when it is used inconsistently and in the absence of other positive strategies is ineffective. Teaching behavioral expectations and rewarding students for following them is a much more positive approach than waiting for misbehavior to occur before responding. The purpose of school-wide PBIS is to establish a climate in which appropriate behavior is the norm.” Schools that implement PBIS must also monitor effectiveness on a regular and frequent basis. Implementation of PBIS by Watson Chapel has resulted in a significant decrease in disciplinary actions, from 562 disciplinary incidents in the 2016-2017 school year to 265 disciplinary incidents in the 2017-2018 school year.

### **Mental Health Considerations**

Early identification and treatment of children with mental health disorders or in crisis can help prevent loss of academic, emotional, and developmental maturity and potentially identify students at-risk of hurting themselves or others. Approximately one in five adolescents has had a serious mental health disorder at some point in his or her life.<sup>7</sup>

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s 2017 survey of high school students (June 15, 2018), presents results that indicate that many students in Arkansas high schools are in need of mental health services. Not only is Arkansas ranked 1<sup>st</sup> nationally with respect to the percentage

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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm?s\\_cid=tw-zaza-1171](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/index.htm?s_cid=tw-zaza-1171)

<sup>7</sup> U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Institute of Mental Health. (2017). Mental Illness. Retrieved May 20, 2018 from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness.shtml>



of our children who have experienced physical or sexual violence, Arkansas is also ranked 1<sup>st</sup> in the percentage of high school students who felt sad or hopeless (40.2%), seriously considered attempting suicide (23.2%), and made a plan about how they would attempt suicide (26.1%). Arkansas is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup>, only behind Louisiana, in the percentage of high school students who indicated they actually attempted suicide (15.8%). The majority of children in crisis (50%-90%) do not seek out or receive the services they need.<sup>8</sup>

In a recently published FBI report focusing on the pre-attack behaviors of active shooters (June 2018,<sup>9</sup> the most common “stressor” identified was mental health. Not the diagnosis of mental illness, but rather “the active shooters appeared to be struggling with (most commonly) depression, anxiety, paranoia, etc. in the year before the attack” (page 17<sup>10</sup>). In addition, “having a diagnosed mental illness was unsurprisingly related to a higher incidence of concurrent mental health stressors among active shooters.” (page 17<sup>11</sup>). In order to help more children in crisis and reduce the potential for violence in our schools, the Commission recommends that student access to mental health services be enhanced. Arkansas school districts are required to provide mental health services to their students, either by in-house professionals or community-based mental health service providers. Currently 90% of school districts contract with community-based providers and 10% employ professionals as well as community contractors (Dr. Elisabeth “Betsy” Kindall, ADE Mental Health Services Coordinator). Partnerships with ADE to expand current initiatives that support access to mental health services for all schools should be considered. Also needed is the development of a “toolbox” of resources for schools to utilize to address specific mental health needs of the students. Decreasing the academic functions, such as test administration, of school counselors to enhance their availability to provide mental health services to students should also be considered. School districts should also be encouraged to apply for the ADE School Based Health Clinic Grant.

Despite the potential number of students who can benefit from mental health services, Arkansas is currently challenged to provide training that helps to proactively identify youth in schools with mental health and substance use disorders or in crisis. Youth Mental Health First Aid (YMHFA) is a widely endorsed evidence-based training program primarily designed for adults who regularly interact with youth (e.g., parents, family members, teachers and school staff, health and human services workers, neighbors, peers, and caregivers) and want to assist those individuals who are in crisis or are experiencing a mental health or addictions challenge. An 8-hour YMHFA curriculum helps program participants to recognize the difference between typical adolescent behavior and behaviors that could potentially be signs of a mental health

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<sup>8</sup> Murphey D, Vaughn B, and Barry M. Access to Mental Health Care. Child Trends Adolescent Health Highlight Publication # 2013-2, January 2013.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/pre-attack-behaviors-of-active-shooters-in-us-2000-2013.pdf/view>

<sup>10</sup> <https://rems.ed.gov/SITEASSESS.aspx>

<sup>11</sup> <https://rems.ed.gov/SITEASSESS.aspx>

problem and identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illnesses and substance use conditions in adolescents and transition-age youth (ages 12-18). The course introduces common mental health challenges for youth, reviews typical adolescent development, and teaches a 5-step action plan on how to help young people in both crisis and non-crisis situations. Topics covered include anxiety, depression, substance use, disorders in which psychosis may occur, disruptive behavior disorders, and eating disorders. Mental health crisis situations covered are: suicidal thoughts and behaviors, non-suicidal self-injury, panic attacks, traumatic events, severe effects of drug or alcohol use, psychotic states, and aggressive behaviors.

According to Mental Health First Aid USA, there are currently only 50 certified Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) trainers in Arkansas (the fifth lowest number for all states),<sup>12</sup> and only 3,829 individuals within the state have received MHFA training (the third lowest number for all states).<sup>13</sup> The number of YMHFA specific trainers within the total of 50 trainers in Arkansas is currently unknown. The Arkansas Center for School Safety (ACSS) recently received an ADE grant that includes the delivery of two Youth Mental Health First Aid train-the-trainer programs, to increase the number of YMHFA trainers in Arkansas by 30. These 30 trainers will then deliver the 8-hour YMHFA awareness course to school staff that have contact with or interact with youth aged 12-18. As school staff are trained to better identify students with mental health and substance use disorders or in crisis, the need for access to mental health services will also increase. In a position statement on school safety provided to the Commission (Appendix I), the Arkansas Association of Education Administrators expressed support for additional mental health services and mental health counselors.

### **Behavior Threat Assessments**

Reports or observations of potential threats to a school must be investigated in an appropriate, timely and effective manner. Based on information obtained, threat assessments determine how credible and serious the threat is and to what extent the person has the resources, intent and motivation to carry out the threat. If it is determined that there is a risk of violence to a school and its students and staff, a plan to manage or reduce the threat must be developed and implemented. In order to investigate and respond to potential threats, the Commission recommends that each school district should establish a behavioral threat assessment team and process. The U.S. Secret Service and U. S. Department of Education have developed an excellent guide for the implementation of a threat assessment process and development of a behavioral threat assessment team<sup>14</sup>. Other examples of threat assessment best practices are the Virginia Model

<https://curry.virginia.edu/sites/default/files/images/YVP/VSTAG%20summary%206-18->

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<sup>12</sup> Mental Health First Aid; <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/algee-ometer/>

<sup>13</sup> Mental Health First Aid; <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/algee-ometer/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.pent.ca.gov/thr/elevenquestions.pdf>

[18.pdf](#)) and the Adams County Ohio Model ([http://acyi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Threat\\_Assessment\\_Protocol\\_Print\\_1.pdf](http://acyi.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Threat_Assessment_Protocol_Print_1.pdf)).

The responsibility of the behavioral threat assessment team is to assess and manage the threat. According to the U.S. Secret Service and U.S. Department of Education threat assessment guide,<sup>15</sup> a threat assessment team should consist of the following individuals:

- i. Senior school administrator
- ii. Respected member of the faculty or administration
- iii. Investigator, such as a SRO or other law enforcement assigned to the school
- iv. Mental health professional
- v. Other professional, such as a guidance counselor, coach, teacher and
- vi. Ad hoc member who is someone familiar with the student.

The U.S. Department of Education also offers free training on behavior threat assessment teams.

### **Communication and Intelligence**

Effective communication and intelligence gathering regarding potential threats can minimize the risk of school violence. Communication between key stakeholders is essential. A well-established communication plan ensures essential information is shared and reduces confusion. The Commission recommends that each school district support, establish, and maintain a comprehensive, common communication system to be utilized by school officials, students, parents, law enforcement and other stakeholders. Examples of such communication systems currently in use include Parent Link, social media (Facebook and Twitter) and texting.

Meaningful collaboration among key stakeholders can eliminate silos and other barriers to effective communication and prevent and mitigate school violence. All school districts should have a plan in place that includes how communication about threats or significant events will be handled. The communications plan should include how the school will notify parents expeditiously of any credible threat or emergency. As indicated throughout this document, schools must have a strong relationship with local law enforcement and have direct communications with them. Another advantage of using SROs in schools is the facilitation of communication between the school and local law enforcement agencies. District School Safety Committees can also foster communication between the school and not only local law enforcement agencies, but also county emergency managers and fire personnel. The US Department of Education's Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools (REMS) Technical Assistance Center provides resources for schools including a step by step guide on planning "the communication and coordination during emergencies and disasters (both internal

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<sup>15</sup> Threat Assessment in Schools: A Guide to Managing Threatening Situations and to Creating Safe School Climates, Washington D.C., July 2014, pps 36-37.

communication and communication with external stakeholders), as well as the communication of emergency protocols before an emergency and communication after an emergency” (<https://rems.ed.gov/K12ComAndWarningAnnex.aspx>).

In the recent study “A Study of the Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States” published by the FBI (June 2018), it was reported that “For active shooters under age 18, school peers and teachers were more likely to observe concerning behaviors than family members.<sup>16</sup> For active shooters 18 years old and over, spouses/domestic partners were more likely to observe concerning behaviors.” Tragedy can be prevented by reporting criminal or suspicious activities/behaviors.

The Commission recommends that school districts, alone or in collaboration with local law enforcement, implement a strategy to promote anonymous reporting of suspicious activity/behavior. A school climate that encourages the sharing of concerns (such as bullying, on school property or electronically) and reports potential threats can directly impact school safety. While not all perpetrators of school shootings were bullied, a large percentage (71%) were bullied or felt personally disenfranchised by someone at school.<sup>17</sup>

The Commission recommends that students and staff be educated on how to recognize and report signs of at-risk behavior and potential threats. Many schools and local law enforcement agencies have established reporting systems through the use of programs such as Crime Stoppers, See Something, Say Something, etc., and anonymous tip lines, apps, etc. While many programs exist, they will not be utilized or effective if students, staff, and citizens are unsure of what to report, who to report to, and when to report. The Sandy Hook Promise Say Something initiative, for example, “is an education and awareness program that provides tools and practices to: Recognize the signs & signals of a potential threat – especially in social media, teach and instill in participants how to take action, and drive awareness and reinforce the need to Say Something” ([https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/prevention\\_programs](https://www.sandyhookpromise.org/prevention_programs)). A school climate that encourages the sharing of concerns (such as bullying) and reports potential threats can have a direct impact on school safety. Additional resources for teaching students how to report threats can be found on the Arkansas Center for School Safety website (<https://arsafeschools.com/safe-schools-program/news/resources-for-talking-with-students-about-school-safety/>).

Receiving and evaluating intelligence from the entire community is critical to ensuring the safety and security of our schools. It was determined by the FBI that “when concerning behavior was

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<sup>16</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation. (June 2018). “A Study of the Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States.” Retrieved from <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/pre-attack-behaviors-of-active-shooters-in-us-2000-2013.pdf/view>

<sup>17</sup> United States Secret Service. (March 2018). “Mass Attacks in Public Spaces-2017.” Retrieved from [https://www.secretservice.gov/forms/USSS\\_NTAC-Mass\\_Attacks\\_in\\_Public\\_Spaces-2017.pdf](https://www.secretservice.gov/forms/USSS_NTAC-Mass_Attacks_in_Public_Spaces-2017.pdf).

observed by others, the most common response was to communicate directly to the active shooter (83%) or do nothing (54%)<sup>18</sup>. In only 41% of the cases the concerning behavior was reported to law enforcement. Therefore, just because concerning behavior was recognized does not necessarily mean that it was reported to law enforcement.” The FBI study suggests that while suspicious behavior may be observed, most isn’t reported. However, when it is reported, law enforcement must properly vet, share, and respond to the information while alerting schools of the information. In addition, in a 2017 report, the U.S. Secret Service, found that “Over three-quarters (of shooters) made concerning communications and/or elicited concern from others prior to carrying out their attacks.”<sup>19</sup>

The “OK2say” program in Michigan, “iWatch” program in Texas, and “School Safety Information Sharing” program in Illinois are examples of some platforms that promote intelligence sharing and reporting between law enforcement and school officials. Arkansas has existing platforms that could possibly be better utilized in enhancing information sharing. The Commission continues to explore these platforms.

### Physical Security

A natural response to the tragic and highly publicized school shootings in recent years is to promote solutions to the physical environment (internal and external locations of school buildings) that are designed to reduce risk of violence. These types of strategies, however, must take into consideration the full spectrum of issues dealt with in creating spaces that are safe havens for students and faculty, while at the same time providing aesthetically pleasant and functional learning environments. Physical security measures must be considered an essential part of a comprehensive school safety plan. While implementing some physical security measures may make the school community feel safe, there is not one single physical security item that can prevent a perpetrator intent on doing harm. As with armed presence in schools, what physical security measures a school can implement will vary depending on many circumstances and situations. Every school is unique.

Areas concerning physical security and the built environment that the Commission focused on thus far in its meetings and school visits include:

1. Create single entry point for main campus buildings with secure vestibule.
2. Remote door release (for interior secure vestibule doors) at reception desk check-in and main entrance.

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<sup>18</sup> Federal Bureau of Investigation. (June 2018). “A Study of the Pre-Attack Behaviors of Active Shooters in the United States.” Retrieved from <https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/pre-attack-behaviors-of-active-shooters-in-us-2000-2013.pdf/view>

<sup>19</sup> United States Secret Service. (March 2018). “Mass Attacks in Public Spaces-2017.” Retrieved from [https://www.secretservice.gov/forms/USSS\\_NTAC-Mass\\_Attacks\\_in\\_Public\\_Spaces-2017.pdf](https://www.secretservice.gov/forms/USSS_NTAC-Mass_Attacks_in_Public_Spaces-2017.pdf).

3. Video intercom phone for remote communication at reception desk check-in (secure vestibule) and main entrance.
4. Bullet resistant glass and wall at reception desk check-in.
5. Visitor management system managed at reception desk check-in.
6. Intruder lockset hardware on all classroom and/or staff doors.
7. Electronic Access Controls on all exterior doors.
8. Vehicle ram protection (bollards, landscaping, fencing, low walls, etc.) at school entrances, especially main entrance.
9. Limit exterior glass and openings into student common areas and classrooms.
10. Produce designs that do not require students to leave the building when changing classes.
11. Locate doors with vision panels to classrooms so as to provide a blind area in the classroom for students to "hide".
12. Provide video surveillance of as much of the school as possible, especially large common areas and corridors.
13. Limit size of landscaping so the landscaping doesn't provide cover or hiding space.
14. Provide storm safe rooms that include intruder safety concepts.
15. Rethink fire alarms, where to locate pull stations and how they work. Maybe pull stations should notify an administrator or staff person that verifies emergency before alerting entire school. Make sure activation of fire alarm does not automatically release doors that may need to remain locked from exterior.
16. Exterior fencing or positioned staff that verifies visitors as they arrive on campus, prior to entering a building.
17. Number windows to classrooms on exterior so first responders can reference position of students and or intruders.
18. Secure roof openings and roof access.

Many of the security enhancements or remedies needed to protect our schools and students against active shooters may ignore other important protective measures school administrators and design professionals have been attempting to implement in school building design for many years. Examples of this quandary are the discussions of solid masonry walls in interior circulation corridors adjacent to classrooms and solid classroom doors to obscure or hide

occupants from view during an active shooter threat. When considering these measures as potential options one would immediately assume that masonry walls and solid doors with hardware capable of being locked from within the space would resolve this potential threat. But this overlooks an important protective element in the day to day operation of school buildings that allows administrators and other faculty to have visibility into classrooms and other instructional spaces from the hallways. So the long existing practice of designing wall systems and doors with vision panels as a primary means for establishing visual connections and accountability within learning spaces must be looked at further in order to determine solutions to promote that are consistent with the goal of reducing risk for a broader spectrum of threats. This example illustrates both the technical nature of public school design and the need for a uniform set of protective measures that the state can offer as guidelines for public schools in order to facilitate the design and construction of school buildings that protect our students from a broad range of threats, including active shooters.

Due to the complex nature physical security measures, the Commission has referred a request to the Advisory Committee on Academic Facilities to conduct further research of security enhancements and physical security guidelines to help ensure student and staff safety in traditional and non-traditional schools for possible inclusion in the Commission's final report in November 2018.

The Advisory Committee was established by Ark. Code Ann. § 6-21-113, and appointed by the Commission for Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation to assist the Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation. Included in the Committee's membership are architects, engineers, school superintendents, and multiple other members with interests in the design and construction of public school infrastructure. Pursuant with statute one of the Committee's responsibilities is a study and review of design and construction standards contained in the Arkansas Public School Academic Facilities Manual, a document that governs all new construction projects for Arkansas public schools.



# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

**STATE OF ARKANSAS**  
**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT**  
**PROCLAMATION**

EO 18-03

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME – GREETINGS:

**EXECUTIVE ORDER TO ESTABLISH THE ARKANSAS SCHOOL SAFETY COMMISSION**

WHEREAS: The Governor has long held school safety as a priority, and he led a national study on school safety in 2012; and

WHEREAS: Recent events involving violence at schools around the country make it necessary for the issue of school safety to be addressed in a comprehensive manner in Arkansas; and

WHEREAS: Crime and violence remain issues in schools nationwide; and

WHEREAS: It is a matter of state importance to provide best practices regarding school safety to our local school districts; and

WHEREAS: Arkansans with backgrounds in education, mental health, and law enforcement possess the necessary expertise to propose and develop workable solutions to the issue of school safety;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ASA HUTCHINSON, acting under the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Arkansas, do hereby order the following:

- (1) There is hereby created the Arkansas School Safety Commission (the "Commission"), which shall advise the Governor and the Department of Education on school safety across Arkansas.
- (2) The Commission shall be composed of members appointed by the Governor and shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor. The chair of the committee shall be designated by the Governor. The Commission shall be composed of:
  - a) A representative of the Office of the Arkansas Attorney General;
  - b) The Director of the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management, or his or her designee;
  - c) A Public School Superintendent;
  - d) A Public School Teacher;
  - e) A Public School Counselor;
  - f) The Director of the Arkansas Division of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation within the Arkansas Department of Education;
  - g) An advisor on school security from the Arkansas Department of Education;
  - h) A County Sheriff;
  - i) A former Federal law enforcement officer;
  - j) A Mental Health professional;
  - k) The Director of the Criminal Justice Institute;
  - l) The Director of the Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy or his or her designee; and
  - m) Additional citizens, as the Governor deems necessary, to represent the different geographic regions of Arkansas.
- (3) The members of the Commission shall have the following duties:
  - a) To advise the Governor and the Department of Education on school safety across Arkansas;

- b) Study and analyze the safety of K-12 schools throughout the state taking into consideration the physical and mental health of students;
  - c) To study the architecture and construction of school buildings as it relates to the safety of students and staff in those buildings, including prevention and response to active shooter threats;
  - d) Make recommendations to the Governor and the Department of Education on improvements or changes needed to increase school safety;
  - e) Consider any and all issues associated with school safety and should undertake school visits, visits with school resource officers, building principals, counselors, superintendents, and others to have a comprehensive view of this topic;
  - f) Consider assigning subcommittees with directions to consider several topics and report back to the full commission with recommendations to be considered;
  - g) The initial report and recommendation will be due to the Governor on July 1, 2018, with subsequent reports being submitted by the Chair of the Commission; and
  - h) The final report of the Commission's findings and recommendations shall be submitted to the Governor no later than November 30, 2018, at which time the work of the Commission will conclude.
- (4) Upon request, the Department of Education may provide staff and other personnel to support the work of the Commission.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed the 1<sup>st</sup> day of March, in the year of our Lord 2018.

  
Asa Hutchinson, Governor



Attest:

  
Mark Martin, Secretary Of State

## APPENDIX B

Members of the commission are as follows:

Dr. Cheryl May - Chair

Director, Criminal Justice Institute (CJI)

University of Arkansas System

William Temple - Vice Chair

Retired Special Agent in Charge, Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI)

John Kaminar

Security and Lost Prevention Manager

Arkansas Department of Education (ADE)

Brad Montgomery

Director of Public School Academic Facilities and Transportation

Arkansas Department of Education (ADE)

A.J. Gary

Director, Arkansas Department of Emergency Management (ADEM)

Tim Helder

Washington County Sheriff

Jami Cook

Director, Commission on Law Enforcement Standards and Training (CLEST)

Will Jones

Deputy Attorney General, Special Investigations Unit

Office of the Attorney General

Dr. David Hopkins

Superintendent, Clarksville School District

Dawn Anderson

High School Counselor, Hot Springs High School

John Allison  
Teacher, Vilonia High School

Tom Jenkins  
Chief Rogers Fire Department

Marvin L. Burton  
Deputy Superintendent, Little Rock School District

Lori Poston  
Child and Adolescent Therapist from Jonesboro

Dr. Margaret Weiss  
MD, PHD, UAMS Professor Department of Psychiatry, and Director of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry

Ricky Hopkins  
Parent of Prescott School District student

Dr. Sterling Claypoole  
Professor in Psychology at South Arkansas Community College and Parent of Students in El Dorado School District

Dr. Joyce Cottoms  
Superintendent, Marvell-Elaine School District

**APPENDIX C****Full Commission Meetings (9)**

March 13, 2018

April 3, 2018

April 17, 2018

May 1, 2018

May 14, 2018

May 30, 2018

June 11, 2018

June 21, 2018

June 28, 2018

**Intel/Communications (5)**

March 27, 2018

April 6, 2018

April 23, 2018

May 29, 2018 (Joint meeting with Law Enforcement)

June 7, 2018

**Law Enforcement (5)**

March 29, 2018

April 16, 2018

April 27, 2018

May 29, 2018 (Joint meeting with Intel/Communications)

June 5, 2018

**Physical Security & Transportation (3)**

March 28, 2018

May 9, 2018

May 25, 2018

**Security & Audit (3)**

March 28, 2018

April 13, 2018

June 7, 2018

**Mental Health & Prevention (4)**

March 28, 2108

April 11, 2018

April 20, 2018

May 14, 2018

## APPENDIX D

### PRESENTERS:

Dr. Elizabeth “Betsy” Kindall, Coordinator of Mental Health Services,  
Arkansas Department of Education  
Lt. Mike Moyer, Arkansas State Police  
Shannon Moore, Arkansas School Board Association, Insurance Division  
Chester “Bubba” Jones, School Resource Officer  
Eric Huber, Supervisor of Safety and Security, Fort Smith School District  
Dr. Cheryl May, Arkansas Center for School Safety  
Vicki French, Arkansas Center for School Safety  
Kathy Martinez-Prather, Director, Texas School Safety Center  
Scott Spainhour, Superintendent, Greenbrier (representing ADE Safe Schools Committee)  
Randy Goodnight, Board Member, Greenbrier School District (representing ADE Safe Schools Committee)  
Dr. David Hopkins, Superintendent, Clarksville School District  
Dr. Richard Abernathy, Executive Director, Arkansas Association of Education Administrators  
Dr. Tony Prothro, Executive Director, Arkansas School Board Association  
Phil Blaylock, School Resource Officer, Morrilton School District  
Dr. Michele Linch, Executive Director, Arkansas State Teachers Association  
Dr. Danyell Cummings, Director of Testing and Evaluation, Little Rock School District  
Courtney Salas-Ford, Deputy Counsel, Arkansas Department of Education  
Dovie Burl, Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), Arkansas State University  
Tamara Williams, Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS), Arkansas State University

### School Visits:

Crossett School District – April 25, 2018  
Westside Consolidated School District – Jonesboro – May 2, 2018  
Conway Public Schools – May 6, 2018  
Bentonville Public Schools – May 8, 2017  
Ouachita River School District – May 22, 2018



## APPENDIX E

### Arkansas Department of Education Safe Schools Committee School Resource Officer (SRO) Professional Development Levels

#### **“Level I” or “Basic” SRO requirements:**

- Completion of a School Resource Officer (SRO) Basic course of at least 40 hours
- Completion of an ACLEST certified School Site Safety Assessment Course
- Completion of at least one additional ACLEST certified school safety training course of at least 4 hours

#### **“Level II” or “Intermediate” SRO requirements:**

- Completion of all Level I requirements
- Must be a SRO for one full school year
- Completion of a School Resource Officer (SRO) II Intermediate course
- Completion of 20 additional hours of ACLEST certified School Safety Training
- Letter of support from law enforcement agency or school administration

#### **“Level III” or “Advanced” SRO requirements:**

- Completion of all Level II requirements
- Must be a SRO for at least 3 full school years
- Completion of 40 additional hours of ACLEST certified school safety training
- Completion of an ACLEST certified scenario-based Active Killer/Shooter course which includes both classroom presentations and practicals in the curriculum
- Letters of support from both the law enforcement agency and the school administration (letters will be accepted from the school superintendent, assistant superintendent, principal or assistant principal) to include testimony of student programs initiated
- Completion of 6 hours of college credit

#### **“Level IV” or “Senior” SRO requirements:**

- Completion of all previous levels
- Must be a SRO for at least 5 full school years
- Must be an active ACLEST certified instructor of school safety courses
- A minimum of 3 letters of support from the community, school and law enforcement agency to include testimony of the SRO’s involvement in community service

- Completion of an additional 6 hours of college credit, with at least 3 of these credit hours earned in English Composition or Technical Writing

## APPENDIX F

### Memorandum of Agreement between the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and the Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas, **acting for and on behalf of the Criminal Justice Institute (CJI)**

This Memorandum of Agreement memorializes the understanding between the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) and the Board of Trustees of the University of Arkansas, acting for and on behalf of the Criminal Justice Institute (CJI) regarding the purpose of the Arkansas Center for School Safety (ACSS), which is being established as a program offered through and operated by CJI. The parties agree that the purpose of ACSS will be to assist the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE) build the capacity of educators, leaders and law enforcement professionals to meet the safety needs of Arkansas's children in public schools.

In furtherance of this Agreement, CJI agrees that:

The ACSS will promote and support school safety statewide, including but not limited to providing active shooter and violence prevention training and technical support and other services related to emergency planning for schools, promoting effective prevention strategies, conducting school safety assessments and other relevant school safety initiatives and programs.

The ACSS will collaborate with the Safe Schools Committee, the Arkansas Department of Education, the Arkansas Department of Emergency Management, the U.S. Department of Education, the Arkansas Safe Schools Association, Education Service Cooperatives, the Arkansas Association of Educational Administrators, the Arkansas School Boards Association, Arkansas Public School Resource Center, Arkansas Rural Education Association and other key stakeholders to provide an efficient and effective one-stop-shop for education and law enforcement professionals to obtain training and technical assistance that meet the critical safety needs of our children.

The ACSS will keep ADE leadership and appropriate program staff advised of changing or emerging school safety and security issues, best practices, lessons

learned, etc., which impact Arkansas Schools.

In furtherance of this Agreement, ADE agrees that:

The ADE will continue to promote school safety and security, and support the ACSS where appropriate, for funding and through dissemination of relevant information on school safety matters to Arkansas K-12 public school superintendents, principals, school safety coordinators, school counselors and others. This will include but not limited to information on: school safety conferences and safety-related training programs and workshops.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this document is executed this

13.

day of

• 2017.

**ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATION**

Board of Trustees of the  
University of Arkansas acting  
for and on behalf of the Criminal Justice Institute

By: -

Director- Criminal Justice Institute  
26 Corporate Hill Drive, Little Rock, AR 7220

7/13/17

# Arkansas Center for School Safety

[www.arsafeschools.com](http://www.arsafeschools.com)

## COURSE OFFERINGS INCLUDE:

Safety in schools remains a top issue for law enforcement, educators, parents, and students. Because students cannot achieve their true academic potential in an environment that is threatening and volatile, many school officials and law enforcement agencies view school resource officer (SRO) programs as effective ways to ensure a more conducive learning environment. There are currently 238 school districts in Arkansas. During the 2017-2018 Arkansas school year, 156 of these school districts are utilizing a total of 316 school resource officers (SROs).

The Arkansas Center for School Safety's (ACSS) comprehensive catalog of basic and specialty school safety training courses have been designed to consider the unique needs of Arkansas schools and communities. A proactive approach to responding to crime and violence, both on the school campus and within the community, is emphasized. These courses are available to both Arkansas law enforcement and Arkansas school personnel, including administrators, teachers, staff, counselors, and school security officers. ACSS was established in July 2017 through a partnership between CJI and the Arkansas Department of Education.

In addition to our scheduled classes, the Center accepts training requests from school districts in need of a specific school safety course in their area. The Center provides free Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE) training to any requesting school district in the state.

Through a grant award from the U.S. Department of Justice—Office of Community Oriented Policing and funding from the Arkansas Attorney General's Office, ACSS provides education, training, resources, and technical assistance to those who make school safety a priority for our kids.

- Active Killer: Response for Educators
- Active Shooter/Rapid Response Training Level I
- Active Shooter/Rapid Response Training Level II
- Autism Spectrum Disorders: Law Enforcement Response ONLINE
- Breaking Down the Bullying Infrastructure in Schools
- Civilian Response to Active Shooter Events (CRASE)
- Drugs on Campus
- Gang Awareness, Prevention & Intervention in Schools
- High Expectations: Addiction & Drugs 101
- Identifying and Preventing Bullying ONLINE
- Improvised Explosive Device (IED) Awareness, Bomb Threats and Search Procedures
- Introduction to Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Introduction to Active Killer Response for Educators ONLINE
- Juvenile Takeover of Social Media: Investigations and Internet Safety
- Learning from the Teen Brain to Improve Bullying Prevention, School Culture, and Safety
- Planning, Conducting and Analyzing Emergency Crisis Plans
- Preventing and Responding to Weapons on Campus
- Proactive Discipline for Reactive Students: Understanding Student Behavior for SROs and Educators
- School Resource Officer I (Basic)
- School Resource Officer II (Intermediate)
- School Safety Refresher ONLINE
- School Site Safety Assessment ONLINE
- Solo Engagement Response to an Active Killer
- SRO Roles and Responsibilities: Improving Relationships with School Personnel
- Strategic Communications for Interacting with Juveniles
- Understanding Juvenile Law

***Clarksville School District ERT Members***

ERT Standard Operating Procedures (SOP).

\*No ERT member will carry a firearm on school grounds that has not been inspected and approved by the Superintendent

\*All firearms will be inspected on an annual basis.

\*If an ERT member suspects that there may be an issue with their firearm they must immediately cease using the firearm and bring it to the superintendent so that it can be sent to an armorer for inspection.

\*The ammunition to be carried by ERT members in the approved firearm must be the ammo issued to the ERT member for “standard carry” by the school district. No ammo substitutions will be allowed without prior approval by the superintendent.

\*ERT members must keep their firearm in an approved holster or approved safe at all times. At no time, unless firearm is secured in an approved safe, can the ERT member not be in control of their firearm. Firearms cannot be carried in bags or purses. Firearms must be secured on the ERT member’s body, via an approved holster or locked in an approved safe, while the ERT member is on school grounds.

\*Firearms may not be removed from the ERT member’s holster, to be inspected, or to be placed in an approved safe, unless the ERT member is in a safe and secure area devoid of all students.

\*ERT members will deploy their firearms only in the instance that an immediate and otherwise unavoidable danger of death or grave bodily harm to self or the innocent is present or when directed by the superintendent or his designee.

\*Firearms are to be carried in a concealed manner at all times.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S RESPONSIBILITIES FOR DISTRICT SECURITY**

The board of directors for the Clarksville School District recognizes that in order to provide its students and staff with some protection from an active shooter situation, or other life-threatening situations, appropriate actions must be taken to prevent, or mitigate the horrific damage that can result from such events. In order to meet this challenge, the board is directing the superintendent to have the security of the physical plant reviewed periodically and to implement any viable recommendations that may arrive from these reviews.

The superintendent is now directed to create and maintain an Emergency Response Team, (ERT). This will require the superintendent to file the necessary paperwork, required by the Arkansas State Police, for the establishment of a School Security Department. The ERT will consist of multiple individuals from each campus, and can include individuals from both certified and classified positions. ERT members must be district employees. ERT membership will be on a voluntary basis. ERT members must be mentally ready and willing to meet the demanding challenges that are presented if an active shooter situation or other similar emergency should ever arise at Clarksville Schools. Prior to being named to the team, each volunteering employee will be carefully screened by the superintendent, and will be psychologically tested with a valid instrument. When these hurdles are met, the qualifying employee will then be rigorously trained, and properly equipped. The initial training will require that each member completes the necessary requirements to become a Commissioned School Security Officer, (CSSO) as established by the Arkansas State Legislature, and as administered by the Arkansas State Police. The superintendent will secure the necessary training opportunities for the ERT members to maintain their commissions. The superintendent has the authority to remove any member at any time from the ERT without cause. All ERT members will be required to participate in a random drug-screening program. If at any time a member believes they can no longer meet the requirements to be a member of the ERT, they can resign the position with no questions or statements being required by the administration. Serving on, resigning from, or declining to serve on the ERT will have no bearing on the regular employment contract of the district employee. All equipment provided to ERT members by the district or any associated grant is the property of the district and must be properly maintained, secured, and returned in accordance with the procedures established by the superintendent. The superintendent is directed to seek input from local law enforcement agencies with the development of the ERT and with ongoing reviews of the ERT and its associated procedures. The superintendent is also directed to seek cooperative training exercises for the ERT with local law enforcement agencies. A, "one time only," stipend will be provided to each ERT member to help offset some of the initial expenses of the training and associated supplies.

Date Adopted: 5-20-2013

Last Revised: 9-16-2013

2-27-2017



### SCHOOL 2018

The recent shootings in Parkland, FL, and Santa Fe, TX, have refocused educators, school boards, and communities on the question of how to best protect children in our schools. While school districts must prioritize safety for all children, schools cannot prevent gun violence by themselves. Educators, parents, community/state leaders, and legislators all have a critical role in this discussion. These recent tragic events demonstrate that more attention and more resources focused on improving school safety must be considered.

AAEA recommends the following:

1. Each district should have policies in place indicating individual school and building safety plans, as well as district- wide safety plans. These well-defined and practiced plans should serve as a guide to address the various safety needs in the school such as lockdown procedures, evacuations, drills and safety protocols, and personnel assignments.
2. Every district should conduct regular audits to evaluate and analyze the effectiveness of their school safety and security plans. First-responders, local law enforcement and the entire school community should be engaged in this process.
3. Every district should communicate with parents and community members about the school-level emergency preparedness protocols to the greatest extent possible.
4. Every district should provide regular training for all school employees on the district's school emergency management systems and protocols.
5. Every district should work to create partnerships between schools, local law enforcement and appropriate community agencies (such as mental health providers) to prevent and reduce school violence.
6. Each district should have the authority to arm employees if the school and community determine that such action is an appropriate safety measure for their community. However, arming employees should not be mandated. These decisions should be carefully considered and decided upon locally on a case-by-case basis.
7. The state should provide funds, possibly via matching grants, for security equipment, security assessments, and additional school resource officers.
8. Additional funding should be provided by the state for mental health counselors and services in schools. Access to these services is a crucial component of any prevention efforts and emergency responses.